

REMARKS

1. Applicant has cancelled the product claims, and has amended claim 7, the process claim, to more clearly describe the unique aspects of the present invention.

2. Claim 7 stand rejected as obvious over Martin in view of Fukuoka '863, Obata et al., and Igari, or vice versa, i.e. Fukuoka, Obata et al., and Igari in view of Martin, both further in view of Fukuoka '158 and Sugisawa et al. Applicant traverses.

One of the key features of the present invention is that the bar that is used to mount the stuffing material can also be used as a handle to eat the stuffed tofu following preparation. This is made possible by leaving the ends of the bar extended out of the tofu, and protected by the container from being covered by the food material, when the bar is placed in the compartment of the container. Then, when the food has been fully prepared, the ends of the bar are available for a user to hold while eating the food.

There is no reference in the cited prior art that teaches any means by which this could be accomplished. Martin teaches a device that has pins running through a center of the foodstuff. While the Examiner posits that these pins could be used as handles to eat the prepared food, that scenario does not appear possible. As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 3, and described at page 1, lines 89-111, the pins 7 pass through the walls of the container. When the food has been prepared, the pins 7 are removed, leaving the ornamentation that was mounted on the pins embedded in the food. The pins 7 must be removed before the food can be taken out of the pan.

In order to render obvious claims, the prior art must disclose or indicate all the elements of the subject claims. In this instance, there is no reference in the prior art that teaches a process for the preparation of stuffed tofu that enables a rod passing through

the center of the food to remain in place to serve as handles as is claimed in the present claims. Accordingly, the prior art cannot be said to render obvious the present claims.

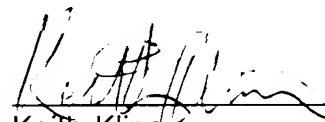
In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant now asserts that all of the grounds for rejection have been traversed or overcome by amendment, and that all of the present claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Applicant therefore requests reconsideration of the objections and rejections, and solicits allowance of the present claims at an early date.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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